THE UNITED STATES FOR FRENCH CANADIANS.

Did I not fear to proclaim what we French call a *vérité de la Palisse*, I should say that the most evident proof of instability in any system is found in its periodic commotions and changes. From whatever cause the disturbance may arise, it indicates a defect of equilibrium, which sooner or later must result, if not in overthrow, at least in a more or less radical change of front. The political organization of the Canadian Confederation appears to me to fall absolutely within these conditions of instability. After the Constitution of 1792 which, by opening the door to many abuses of power, drove the people to insurrection, we were favored, in 1841, with what is known to us as "the Union," that is, the union of the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. This so-called "Union," sprung from that of absolutism and injustice, could not endure, and, after twenty-five years' hard service over an impossible road, was finally abandoned by the wayside, like a worn-out vehicle, and was succeeded by a Confederation of all the British Provinces of North America.

This Confederation, hastily conceived and badly carried out, which was to settle everything and give satisfaction to everyone, brought safety to neither principle nor person; it remains a hybrid combination which threatens ruin to itself at every moment, a combination never intended by its inventors—as is an open secret to-day—to be more than a makeshift to meet pressing difficulties, and prepare the way for some more definite arrangement. This "definite arrangement" meant, for the simple, of whom there were more than one might think among the sponsors of the new *régime*, political independence at some future day beneath the ægis of Great Britain, with a possible sceptre wielded by a scion of the House of Brunswick; and for the knowing, Imperial Federation. But whatever may have been the dreams of the one party or the plans of the other, one fact is patent: a fair trial has been given to the new organization. For more than a full quarter-of-a-century, the makeshift has hobbled on its way with greater or less misadventure, and to-day everyone, Liberal or Conservative, feels the necessity of some movement towards

"the definite arrangement." Everyone feels it, everyone discusses it, even though without unanimity of view or power of definition.

The question has long been under private examination, and from time to time has made such claims upon public attention, and particularly during the last year or two, that at the present moment it seems universally admitted that the matter must be solved without long delay. In fact, even those who have a material interest in the present *status quo* have never dared to pretend that the existing conditions can be permanently maintained. From which it follows that some political change is universally acknowledged in Canada as inevitable. Opinions are divided only on the question, "Which is the way we must eventually tread towards our final goal?" Three roads are open before us: first, Imperial Federation, already spoken of, and in favor of which active mission-work is done in certain quarters; second, Independence, pure and simple, without those dreams of British protection which fit in with nothing, practically or theoretically; third, Annexation with the United States.

These different ways have been recognized and studied often and at length by most serious thinkers, but ever from the point of view and from the interest of our population at large, without particular attention, however, to the different elements of which it is composed. In this article I will endeavor, to the best of my ability, to serve as interpreter of what I believe to be the opinion of most of my compatriots, the French Canadians of the Province of Quebec, touching these three different ways of attaining their country's success; an end they cannot conceive of apart from their future welfare as a distinct nationality.

To look at the whole question seriously and to understand it thoroughly in all its peculiarities, it must first be set in its true light. And this is what I conceive to be its true light: French Canadians differ in some respects from other colonists, who have no other interest to consider than that of their adopted country. They are like the inhabitants of New England in the last century, who, finding themselves divided between two loyalties, that towards their mother-country and that towards themselves, naturally chose the latter. For the French Canadians the alternative is complicated, not only by difference of race and religion, but also by the instinctive feeling common to all conquered people. "Conquered people" is a term which I use here with hesitation, for I know it to be repugnant to the national susceptibilities of my French compatriots. Whenever

an orator in Parliament or in any public meeting alludes to the "Conquest," he is almost sure to awaken a protest from some quarter. "He should not have said conquest, we were not conquered; we were ceded by France to England; it was not a conquest, but a cession"; and so on. In my opinion this is mere childishness; I cannot see that it is more humiliating to suffer defeat when crushed by numbers, than to be shamefully abandoned by one's own. To make such distinctions is only playing with words. For, whether we were ceded or conquered, the treaty was imposed on France by force of arms and against our will; the difference, if difference there be, is so slight that it does not merit more serious notice.

Nevertheless in deference to such susceptibilities, I will withdraw the word, and say that to judge adequately of the position held by the French Canadians in the present case, one must not fail to take into consideration the feeling common to all people who have lost their national existence. This feeling is the quiet, unavowed and unconscious, but instinctive expectation of some reaction ever cherished, ever dreamed of, and secretly nourished by some undefined hope of future emancipation. Even in the case of races decimated by subjection, this never dies out: how can it then be absent from the hearts of French Canadians, who, instead of gradually diminishing in number, have, on the contrary, developed and multiplied in the most extraordinary manner under the British *régime?*

For them *le fait accompli* has never been accepted with all its consequences. They loyally pledged allegiance to England, and they have loyally held to their pledge; but never did they hold that that pledge bound them to be and remain English, fastened to England now and forever. Not that they in any way entertain the slightest hope or desire to resume their former allegiance to France; but they feel themselves French, they are proud to be so, and are bound to remain so. On this free soil of America, where all races are invited to a common feast of concord, progress and equality in friendly emulation, they have at heart other ambitions than the ambition of eternally bearing the yoke of betrayed or conquered people, tamely linked to the fortunes of a nation whose greatness they may admire, but which is not and cannot be anything to them, and which, by the influence of tradition, they cannot but instinctively consider in a vague way as the "hereditary enemy."

It is natural enough that English Canadians, who are bound to England by tradition, by intellectual association and by nationality,

should, through pride of race and enthusiasm for the old flag, be ready to accept a perpetual vassalage and a dangerous solidarity, in the hope, by cementing the different parts of the empire, of upholding England in that preponderance of power which now seems slipping from her grasp. But we, Canadians of French origin, have not at all the same motives of sacrifice towards Downing Street. We are British subjects by neither blood nor choice. No particular affection binds us to England. We honor her flag which floats above us; we have before this spilt our blood in her defence, and we are still ready to answer her call, as a matter of duty; but she does not awaken with us any of those feelings which stir a nation. Reason and argument cannot destroy the stamp of nature. Our mother-country is France! If ever a conflict should arise between her and England, which God forbid—it is hard for me to say so, but it is true—we should be for France. Treason! some may cry. Nonsense; for our forefathers never voluntarily consented to become British subjects, and if we are such it is against their will and ours. Except for England and her cannons, we should still live under the flag of France.

Well, then, in presence of these facts, and since, in spite of all ties of blood and tradition, we should refuse political alliance with our former mother-country, how could we be expected to consent to an infeoffment not only with the United Kingdom, but also with distant countries like Australia, the Indies, East and West, and those other lands spread all around the globe, with which, although parts of that "Empire upon whose flag the sun never sets," we have no more natural connection than with the planet Mars? Such striking considerations appeal to even the most illiterate of my compatriots, and if French Canadians have a voice in the matter, they will never consent to sign a pact more galling perhaps to their feelings than hurtful to their material interests. Therefore, in my opinion—an opinion I hold in common with all our statesmen, publicists and men of business—if, in discussing the different forms of government which Canada might finally accept, the views of the French Canadians are taken into consideration, Imperial Federation must be absolutely thrown aside. It is conceivable that pressing political considerations or party exigencies may stifle the expression of public opinion through the press or from the platform upon this point; but those who can speak freely and without compromising any impending question must admit it.

The first hypothesis being set aside, there remain Independence, and Political Union with the United States. Here again public opinion dares hardly declare itself on account of party considerations. With us, dissimulation forms such an integral part of our political life that most of us are quite prepared to deny the existence of the sun at mid-day, should such a statement in any way shock the prejudice of any individual or group of acknowledged influence and position. In a situation so complex as ours it could not be otherwise. Not only the political chiefs but even the rank and file of their following must beware of expressing any idea which has not received the approbation of a majority the more difficult to satisfy in that it is composed of elements often more antagonistic than heterogeneous. One may not even state bare facts, for fear approves them *in petto.*

And this is why—when the word "Annexation" is on the lips of every man, when the mention of Independence in a political meeting is the call for unanimous applause—there may yet be found politicians who, though neither blind nor deaf, will affirm to the agents of foreign newspapers that there is no desire for annexation in Canada, that no one longs for Independence, and that French Canadians in particular wish for but one thing—to be left where they are, while the rest of the world goes on its way. It is high time this legend should be reduced to its true significance. As I have already said, England for us is an ally to whom we are faithful, and toward whom we have no real or serious cause of complaint, but who, after all, does not call forth any spontaneous affection on our part. Should the day ever come when we must choose between the loyalty we owe to her and the love we bear our own children, she will have no right to expect from us the heroic abnegation of siding with her "for better, for worse." And this day cannot now be far distant. Nations, like individuals, cannot forever remain in tutelage; and the more we increase in number, the further we tread in the way of progress, the more pressing our need and cry for emancipation become. What form this emancipation may take is the question to be solved, and here again the French Canadian finds himself in a peculiar position.

Of course any independence that would give to the Province of Quebec, that is to say, to French Canadians, an autonomy of its own, distinct from that of the other confederated Provinces, is out of the question. Such an independence would be of no real benefit to us, for it would, on the contrary, isolate us while paralyzing the movements of the community as a whole. If Independence had for effect

merely the dividing-up of our territory, and for ideal the establishment of four or five republics like San Marino or principalities like Monaco, surely it would hardly be worth the trouble to change our colonial incapacity for a still more insignificant position, our present instability for a complete loss of balance. Such Independence is dreamed of by no one. Moreover, it is as impracticable as it is absurd; for were we senseless and blind enough to wish it, our compatriots of different origin would never, thank God, be foolish or short-sighted enough to grant it or allow us to obtain it. No; there is only one way of looking at the question: whether we become federated with the Empire or recognized as an independent nation, Canada must stand as a whole, with a government neither French nor English, but Canadian. Our only ambition, as French Canadians, would be to have our legitimate share of influence therein. But what would that influence amount to were we left alone face to face with the situation, at the mercy of a majority frequently capricious, ever interested, and inevitably hostile?

The word "hostile" may here sound unjust and exaggerated. It is not a *lapsus calami*, however: I carefully weighed it before it fell from my pen. Let me explain: The hostility of which I speak does not mean the venomous hostility which fires those French-hating fanatics who are even now endeavoring to organize into a political party, a war-party I might say, to carry on a savage and incessant warfare against all that bears the name of French and Catholic. These fishers in troubled waters are too feeble before the liberal and generous feeling of the majority of the English population, to inspire us with any serious fears for our future. I do not even allude to that latent hostility, hypocritical or instinctive in origin, which does not result as the outcome of acknowledged principle or definite tactics, but which none the less exists to a great extent in social and business circles. It is this sentiment which claims for the English of Canada the title of "the superior race," and often betrays itself in that petty and self-satisfied air, impossible as it may seem, with which certain persons amongst us will actually plume themselves on an ignorance of the French language.

This hostility we fear no more than the other, for, given the time and place, we shall always victoriously dispose of it, backed by all that there is of intelligence and enlightenment among our countrymen of different descent. But I speak of that hostility which must ever exist from the very nature of things; that unreasoning hostility

which led me, and my English playfellows, to shoulder each other off the sidewalk, which incited them to hail us as *Johnny Batistes* and us to call them *sacré Irlandais*, whenever we met in any "official" capacity; that hostility which arises from the distinctive character of two races that differ in religion, language, habits, customs, sympathies, aspirations and even in physical externals; that involuntary hostility which springs more from sensation than interest, that comes neither from the heart nor from the head, and which outleaps the boundaries of reason, because it dwells not in individuals but in the masses; that hostility, in short, which is born from the juxtaposition of two different nationalities on the same sod—like two lovers before the same woman—one of whom some day must win: a natural, fatal, inevitable and almost legitimate hostility, because it is the consequence of that universal law of nature, the struggle for life.

One may ask, Why should we fear Independence on account of these drawbacks, which after all are drawbacks we face from day to day under the existing conditions? The reply is that, slight as it may seem, the influence of England is really enormous in Canada. And, as England has a vital interest to keep peace within her colonies, this influence has so far been to us an element of safety which might be sorely missed and regretted once the tie that binds us to her has been undone or broken. It must be added that the French Canadians are neither blind nor indifferent to considerations of general importance which may affect the present and future welfare of the country as a whole, in such an event as its political freedom under a separate flag. We, as well as others, see our illimitable frontiers, as impossible to defend against the smuggler as against the invader; we see our commerce and industry more or less at the mercy of an all-powerful neighbor who, at any moment, might bring us to starvation by merely closing her doors; we understand that, owing to the existing difference of climate, the European emigration will ever more willingly flock towards the United States than towards us, and consequently that, whatever may be our efforts or achievements in material progress, we cannot but be enormously and perpetually distanced by the prodigious increase of the American Republic. And from all this, we conclude that to be neighbors under such conditions is for us to be forever condemned to a discouraging inferiority, with no alternative but that of bending the back and of throwing ourselves upon the generosity of our rivals, whenever any misunderstanding or conflict of interest may arise.

There is, I know, nothing to strike a poetical fancy in all this. The word "Independence" has a general significance which appeals more eloquently to national pride; its sonority rings pleasantly on the ear; but serious-minded people, habituated to judge questions on their rival merit, are not led by sounds or sentiments. I must, however, acknowledge that some of the most prominent among them do not hesitate openly to advocate the idea of Independence, in spite of all possible objections; but, without questioning their sincerity for one moment, I have not the slightest doubt but that they do not follow such course without the mental reservation: "Let us be free first; we will trim our sails afterwards." This after all may be the most practical way of facing the question; but for those who, not having to deal with the matter as to "ways and means," wish only to realize the purely theoretical point, this *formule opportuniste*, as it might be termed in France, is not at all satisfactory. And the question still remains, "What would be left to our choice, when Imperial Federation is rejected and Permanent Independence acknowledged as impossible or dangerous?"

There is for me, and I am sure for the greater number of my compatriots, only one reasonable solution to the problem; that is, to accept the last of the three alternatives pointed out at the beginning of this article, a political union with the United States:—in the received newspaper-phrase, Annexation.

The term "Annexation" has for a long time been most unpopular among the French people of Canada. This arose from two reasons: the smouldering fire of old historical hatreds which so often stained with blood the battle-fields of the past, and the instinctive repugnance of the clergy for the word "Republic," which for them meant revolution, terror and every "social disorder." To this we may add prejudice skilfully and incessantly stirred up by public men interested in flattering the ultra-loyal sentiments of our English population. Of those three causes of antipathy, the first—the most serious—has entirely disappeared. The memory of the old quarrels has passed away; the murderous struggles of a former day are completely forgotten; even the name of *Bostonnais*, which, by reason of the long struggle, formerly called forth such antagonistic feeling amongst us, is not now heard once in a year throughout the length and breadth of the land. With it has disappeared also the name "Yankee," with its sordid or even contumelious significance. The generous and universal hospitality extended to eleven or twelve hundred thousand

French Canadians living in the United States to-day has completely wiped out all traces of the old animosity. To-day one says "Americans," and that, with an open sense of sympathy and admiration.

The clergy on their side have considerably altered their opinion in respect to the United States. The great number of priests established in New England and especially in the great centres where French Canadian immigrants have gathered together, have contributed not a little to destroy the legend of the "social slough" and the *démagogie effrenée.* To-day, they know that religious persecution is not to be feared in any part of the Union; that on the contrary the Roman Catholic form of worship there enjoys the most complete liberty, that its priests are as highly considered and esteemed as in Canada, and that, in short, nothing prevents an American citizen from being as good a Catholic as any English subject. It must not, however, be inferred from this that the French Canadian priests who have remained at home have become Annexationists. Far from it. Some of them have; and, when the old prejudices are considered, when one sees others barely startled by the statement that all, or nearly all of their *confrères* who live in the United States are Annexationists, it must be admitted that the progress made is enormous. Will they venture farther? It is not impossible; but for those who understand how little attraction any new venture has for the Catholic clergy and their high regard for the proverb, *Un tiens vaut mieux que deux tu l'auras,*—"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"—will look upon it as at least questionable. But in any case, it is incontestable that, possibly as a result of the indifference more and more marked of the Catholic clergy touching this question, the people, without distinction of party, become day by day reconciled to an idea and a word which they had learned hitherto to repudiate without a second thought.

We may add that the political influence of the Canadian Catholic clergy is no longer what it once was. For many a long year this influence was omnipresent; it took upon itself to decide all questions, to think, read, write and vote for everyone; but "the pitcher that goes too often to the well——" In short, the clergy might even yet impede any great public measure by working against its acceptance, but they never would oppose it in any peremptory manner; they would not even make the attempt, for they are wise enough to know that in such an attempt they would be outflanked. They have already suffered checks, and all enlightened Catholics should rejoice at it, for

this clerical meddling in things purely temporal is ill-omened in any country, and must become a source of danger for us as for others.

So that, I repeat, the idea of Annexation has, during the last few years, made rapid progress with Canadians of French origin; the fact is that, even to-day, were they consulted on the question under conditions of absolute freedom, without any moral pressure from either side, I am certain that a considerable majority of Annexationists would result from the ballot. And this majority cannot but increase; for, in the same measure that the public mind is educated, that a closer union is established between the two countries, that the United States grow in greatness beside us, and that our internal difficulties, the necessary consequence of our organic defects, are complicated; our population cannot but be more and more struck by this fact of vital importance, that herein only may be found the solution of all the problems which render our position so trying, our footing so unstable and our future so uncertain. In fact, alliance with the States of the Union would with one sweep of the pen settle all those thorny questions which now embarrass us. At one stroke we should benefit by all the progress of our neighbors up to this point; we should enter into free commercial relations with a country of seventy millions of inhabitants; the lines uncomfortably strained which hold us in the wake of another people would be thrown off; we should have no more hatred or rivalry of faith or race; no longer conquerors ever looking upon us as the conquered; no longer any joint responsibility with any European nation; no longer any frontiers; no longer any possible wars; a single flag over the whole of North America, which then would be, not the holding of any particular nation, but the home of Humanity itself, the Empire of Peace, the richest and most powerful dominion of the Earth, under a democratic government having as its leading principle the recognition of the same rights and the imposition of the same duties among all its subjects, without question of the blood which flows in their veins or of the form in which they may choose to worship God.

And what are we called upon to give in exchange for this? For our British compatriots there must, it is true, be a sacrifice of those traditions, which, however, they would have to abandon sooner or later; but as for us, absolutely nothing! Who can fail to recognize that here is that which a great statesman so aptly termed "Manifest Destiny"?

LOUIS HONORÉ FRECHETTE.

MUNICIPAL SANITATION IN NEW YORK AND BROOKLYN.

In the article on "Municipal Sanitation in Washington and Baltimore," published in The Forum for August, special attention was called to the differences between the death-rates of the white and of the colored race, and to the importance of taking these into consideration in comparing the mortality of different districts in those cities for the purpose of estimating their relative sanitary condition. In studying the vital statistics of New York and Brooklyn, the race differences in the white population of different districts are also of great importance.

The figures of the Eleventh Census show that on June 1, 1890, New York had a population of 1,515,301, occupying 81,828 dwellings on 25,741 acres of ground, giving 58.87 persons to the acre, and 18.52 persons to a dwelling. At the same time, Brooklyn had a population of 806,343, occupying 82,282 dwellings on 18,084 acres, giving 44.59 persons to the acre and 9.80 persons to each dwelling. New York was, therefore, much the more densely populated of the two cities, although a larger proportion of the business population lived outside the city limits than was the case in Brooklyn. Of the population of New York, 25,674 were colored, including 1,970 Chinese. To distinguish race differences among the whites, the best means at our command is a classification by the birthplaces of the mothers. According to this, New York contained 334,725 Americans; 55,572 English and Welsh; 399,348 Irish; 19,627 Scotch; 16,239 French; 403,784 Germans; 80,235 Russians and Poles; 9,647 Canadians; 13,311 Scandinavians; 15,555 Hungarians; 12,287 Bohemians; 54,334 Italians, and 74,963 other foreigners, or persons of unknown race. New York has a larger Irish population than any city in Ireland, and, of German cities, only Berlin, Vienna and Hamburgh exceed it in number of German population. Brooklyn in 1890 contained 10,946 colored inhabitants; 268,097 Americans; 50,379 English and Welsh; 196,372 Irish; 14,195 Scotch; 4,777 French; 195,663 Germans; 7,581 Russians and Poles; 7,200 Cana-

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exercised by the immense lakes of fresh water in many localities in the interior of Canada—influences which are absent in Russia—and thus we have in Canada greater varieties of climate, and larger areas of country suitable for settlement and cultivation.

There is one especial feature in which Canada differs from Russia, which confers upon the Dominion great benefit, as will readily be acknowledged. Russia has no free outlet to the waters of the Atlantic to give access to the high seas. The navigation of the Baltic is closed in winter, and the ice-bound shores of the Arctic Ocean are seldom open. If the return of winter closes the Canadian ports on the St. Lawrence and its affluents, fortunately the open ports of the maritime provinces offer free access to the Atlantic at all times of the year. The best known of the Atlantic harbours connected by railway with the interior are St. Andrews, St. John, Halifax, Louisburg, and Sydney. The last-named are the nearest to Europe. There are few better harbours than Sydney; it is easy of access and egress, and capable of containing a large number of ships in safety, and, moreover, it is in the heart of the Cape Breton coal fields. Sydney has, however, its drawbacks; the adjacent sea is in the winter season at times laden with drift ice, which frequently remains until late in May; large masses of ice are sometimes driven into the harbour at this season.

Louisburg, once the principal seat of the French power in North America, is advantageously situated, but the harbour is small, the area of deep water suitable for large vessels limited, while the entrance is contracted, and is held by mariners to be open to other objections.

Halifax Harbour is described in nautical works as "one of the best in the world, affording space and depth of water sufficient for any number of the largest ships with safety. It is easier of access and egress than any other large harbour on the coast." There can be no doubt that with a sufficient number of automatic buoys, lights, and signals, Halifax may be approached in any weather at any time, day or night, with absolute safety. Unlike New York, Halifax has no intricate entrance channel such as that at "Sandy Hook," impassable by Atlantic liners at some conditions of the tide, especially in bad weather. This difficulty may not be generally known, as in reporting the passages of fast steamers on the New York route, the time of transit is usually given not from the pier at New York to the pier at Liverpool, but from a point outside of Sandy Hook to the most westerly light on the Irish coast. This is misleading, as the time of making the voyage is considerably increased